



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH**

*P.O. Box 47990 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7990*

March 8, 2006

Dear Board of Health Members,

For many years, the State Board of Health (SBOH) has held regular meetings in local health jurisdictions across the state to better understand local concerns, including the concerns of local boards of health. We believe our efforts should support your own, since you are the prime policy makers for public health services. In 2002, SBOH took on a project to strengthen ties with local boards of health. The SBOH 2005 Strategic Plan has reaffirmed the importance of this work. As part of this project:

1. SBOH will create opportunities for its members to meet in person with local boards and their members. In many jurisdictions, this will take the form of sending an SBOH board member and a staff person to a regular meeting of each local board to hear about local priorities and concerns. Alternatively, the Board will consider joint meetings with local boards on special topics of mutual interest or invite local board of health members to address SBOH when it meets in their jurisdiction. Ideally, SBOH representatives would visit with each local board of health at least once every three years.
2. SBOH has asked that it be added to the mailing list for LBOH meeting agendas and minutes. Local board of health minutes are highlighted in the SBOH on-line publication "FYI." This publication also contains a brief summary of the leading public health, medical and other media articles on health issues and a listing of upcoming state, regional and national health-related meetings and conferences. It is available on line anytime at our Web page at [www.sboh.wa.gov](http://www.sboh.wa.gov).
3. Local boards of health have been added to the SBOH meeting agenda distribution list to increase awareness of current topics it is discussing.
4. SBOH will continue its long-standing practice of holding its regular meetings in various local health jurisdictions to give local boards, as well as residents across the state, convenient access to its meetings.
5. Our staff has contacted your office recently to update your individual board of health page on our Web site to make sure your complete information is available to the public as well as your fellow public health workers.

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While we expect these efforts will help each of us improve our knowledge of the other's perspectives, we know there is no substitute for face-to-face discussions. That is why ***our staff will be calling many of you in the coming weeks*** to ask that a member of our Board have a few moments to meet with you or your entire board at or near the time and place of one of your upcoming board meetings.

Our goal for these talks is to hear your views of how public health activities are faring in your community. To do our jobs better, we would like to hear how you are coping with the strengths (and weaknesses) of both your local public health efforts and the community you serve. How are you coping with funding shortages, regulatory and accountability demands, the need for ever better trained and more widely expert staff, planning for a potential pandemic, strained community medical resources and social support systems, and divergent community attitudes toward the role of government in health areas? Are there messages we can help you bring to Olympia or better ways of doing our business that will increase state government's usefulness?

We do not plan a lengthy presentation about the State Board of Health, the Department of Health, or state government policy. We have no new program to offer. We simply hope to hear from you. If you have any questions about this request, or would like to discuss it, please feel free to call the Board's executive director, Craig McLaughlin, at (360) 236-4106.

Thank you and we look forward to meeting you and hearing your thoughts soon about your efforts to create a safer and healthier Washington in these difficult times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Marin Thorburn, MD, MPH". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kim M. Thorburn, MD, MPH  
Chair, Washington State Board of Health